

Minutes of the Hagerman National Fish Hatchery Coordination Meeting February 16, 2005

| Attendees | Agency | Office |
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| Bryan Kenworthy | USFWS | Hagerman National Fish Hatchery (HNFH) |
| Chris Starr | USFWS | Lower Snake River Compensation Plan |
| Ray Jones | USFWS | Idaho Fisheries Resource Office (IFRO) |
| Kathy Clemens | USFWS | Idaho Fish Health Center (IFHC) |
| Nate Wiese | USFWS | HNFH |
| James Brandon | USFWS | HNFH |
| Mark Olson | USFWS | HNFH |
| Eric Willet | USFWS | HNFH |
| Steve Money | USFWS | HNFH |
| Brian Clifford | USFWS | HNFH |
| Anna Ray | USFWS | HNFH |
| Chris Harrington | IDFG | Nampa Research |
| Tom Rogers | IDFG | Headquarters-Boise |
| Bill Horton | IDFG | Headquarters-Boise |
| Brent Snider | IDFG | Sawtooth Fish Hatchery (SFH) |
| Rick Lowell | IDFG | Magic Valley Fish Hatchery (MVFH) |
| Pat Moore | IDFG | Magic Valley Fish Hatchery (MVFH) |
| Jerry Chapman | IDFG | Niagara Springs State Fish Hatchery (NSFH) |
| Paul Dorman | IDFG | Niagara Springs State Fish Hatchery (NSFH) |
| Doug Engemann | IDFG | Pahsimeroi State Fish Hatchery (PFH) |
| Paul Abbott | Idaho Power | Boise Office |
| Stefanie Bosch | Idaho Power | Boise Office |
| Doug Burton | IDFG | Eagle Fish Health Lab |
| Doug Munson | IDFG | Eagle Fish Health Lab |

Bryan Kenworthy convened the meeting at 9:00 am. After introductions of the attendees, Bryan discussed the topics outlined on the agenda.

Phosphorous WLA/NPDES permit renewal

Bryan Kenworthy reported that the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) has published its 2nd public Comment Draft of the mid-Snake TMDL/Aquaculture Waste Load Allocation. IDEQ has accepted the seasonality component for monitoring and reporting, first proposed by the Conservation Hatcheries. The second draft adds seasonality for the commercial aquaculture sector. IDEQ still must submit the document to U.S. EPA for approval. The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit is still pending with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA needs to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act requirements.

Water Issues

Diminishing spring flows continue to be an issue at HNFH as with most of the fish hatcheries in the Magic Valley region. HNFH remains down, on average, about 12 cfs from its water right with a continuing downward trend. Rick Lowell noted that MVFH is about 40 cfs below its water rights and is also continuing to decline. Canal companies in Water District 120 (Water rights above Lake Walcott) have recently made a call on water that has prompted Legislators to consider revision of some water laws and the potential of retiring up to 100,000 acres farm land to reduce the number of pumpers. Negotiations for Water District 130 (water rights below Lake Walcott) continue, however, the March 15 deadline is approaching and a settlement has not yet been reached.

Bryan Kenworthy suggested that individuals calling for water need to justify use of the water they are calling for and may need to justify how efficient the water is being used. There is not a lot of case law on this issue and how “efficient” use may be determined is yet to be decided. Bryan discussed the HNFH Best Management Plan outlining how water is apportioned to different production scenarios throughout the year. The HNFH also documents water flows on a regular basis and monitors dissolved oxygen periodically. A program such as the Rainbow Trout Dworshak Mitigation may help justify water use during the periods when steelhead biomass is low. Bryan also discussed the IDWR’s initiative to examine opportunities to develop mitigation projects to pump water from spring sources, during off-peak periods, to different users to help curb the water crisis. Additionally, Bryan discussed possible fees, levied by the IDWR, for aquaculture facilities of \$50 per cfs to fund future water rights administration and enforcement issues.

Tom Rogers discussed that it would be a good idea to document water use on a monthly or weekly basis to determine needs. Jerry Chapman suggested that you should be able to justify how much water you need. NSFH has started taking dissolved oxygen samples every two weeks to document their need for water. Paul Abbott said that the efficiency issue has been brought up for field irrigators, but so far as he knew, as long as the water was being used for growing crops, the variation between individual farming practices were not being challenged. Chris Starr commented that conservation hatcheries should be considered differently than commercial aquaculture farms for the issue of efficient use of water.

Bryan Kenworthy discussed a potential Water Banking model that is being developed by the University of Idaho, Water Resources Research Institute for the Snake River Aquifer. This model would be used to track water availability or loss during water right transfers.

New Zealand Mud Snail/ Bliss Rapids Snails

New Zealand Mud Snails (NZMS) continue to persist in the springs at the HNFH. Bryan discussed some of the research that is being conducted at the University of Idaho on NZMS. Currently, the HACCP plan for HNFH does not allow for the transfer of fish from HNFH to the Clearwater basin, because HNFH is positive for NZMS. The HNFH management plan for the threatened Bliss Rapids Snail is still in development.

Tom Rogers discussed an anecdotal reference of NZMS being found in the Clearwater drainage, but would have to confirm the report later. Chris Harrington suggested that NZMS have had several possible routes of transfer to the Clearwater drainage from previous stocking protocols, but he did not know of confirmed specimens from the drainage.

Friends of the Northwest Hatcheries

Bryan Kenworthy explained the HNFH partnership with the Friends of the Northwest Hatcheries group as part of an outreach initiative for the HNFH. The group seeks to work with hatcheries to develop and improve visitor services.

FWS SAMMS program

Bryan Kenworthy explained the Fish and Wildlife Service's Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS). SAMMS is designed to create a condition assessment of assets and their associated maintenance costs for the purpose of funding justification. Bryan suggested that this might become something that is incorporated into hatcheries under the LSRCP.

Bill Horton motioned that the meeting agenda should be amended to delay the steelhead production discussion until representatives from the Shoshone-Bannock tribe arrived. The motion was accepted to amend the agenda.

LSRCP Salmon River AOP/BPA funding status – Chris Starr

Chris discussed the development of the BPA 5-year budget plan. The LSRCP has added annual maintenance and upkeep monies (approximately \$2.5 million) to the budget proposal and a modest increase for the cost of living increases. The budget is still under review by BPA. Chris Starr also mentioned that the Lower Snake Cooperators meeting will be held March 8 and 9th at 9:00 a.m. Chris can be contacted for copies of the agenda. Chris Starr acknowledged that there have been difficulties appropriating projects for the excess funds available at the end of the fiscal year. These surpluses/deficits are not realized until very close to the end of the fiscal year.

Bryan Kenworthy stated that if the funds are made available late in the year it is past the deadline set by Region 1, Contracting and General Services. Last year it required written justification and special regional approvals to spend those funds after the deadline. Needing these approvals slows the process of allocating the HNFH funds. Bill Horton acknowledged that the LSRCP funds have been instrumental for their program to help with needed equipment costs. Bryan Kenworthy explained the Man-lift sharing between the HNFH and State Hatcheries in the Magic Valley as a good example of utilizing equipment efficiently.

Fish Health – Kathy Clemens

Kathy stated that the HNFH fish have had excellent health so far this year. There have been some minor sore-back problems, but no drastic sore-back problems in the Clearwater stock yet. Kathy has not seen as much Nucleospora (NS) this year as in previous years. Pat Moore inquired about studies examining the difference in water hardness between the Clearwater Drainage and water from the Snake River Aquifer. Kathy responded that the water differences may be an additional stressor on Clearwater stocks.

Hatchery Evaluation/Special Studies – Ray Jones

Ray discussed the current study at the HNFH examining mortality and fish health issues between the Clearwater and Sawtooth stocks. In the past, the Clearwater stock has experienced increased mortalities

during February and March. To date, the Clearwater stock are starting to show slightly increased mortalities than the Sawtooth stock, but fish health remains relatively good for both.

HNFH Rainbow Trout Program – Nate Wiese

Nate handed out a summary of the Rainbow Trout program at the HNFH. There was discussion between Mark Olson, Rick Lowell, and Pat Moore about egg inventories from Hayspur Hatchery. MVFH was very close to the egg inventory numbers that Hayspur estimated, but HNFH has had slightly lower egg numbers than Hayspur estimates. Doug Burton suggested that the final stocking numbers should be compared to the initial inventory numbers. Nate stated that the 2006 egg request will take into account the difference in inventory numbers as well as mortalities during 2005.

Annual Operating Plan (AOP) Meeting

Bill Horton asked if Nez Perce representatives should be invited to attend the coordination meeting. Bryan Kenworthy responded that inviting the Nez Perce representatives would be appropriate, but they may be better suited by attending the AOP meeting. Tom Rogers inquired with Doug Munson, Doug Burton, Kathy Clemens, and Ray Jones as to how the recent Clearwater AOP meetings went. The consensus was that the meetings went well.

Bill Horton suggested calling the Shoshone-Bannock representatives during break to determine their travel status. A short break was taken to contact them.

It was determined during the break that the Shoshone-Bannock representatives would not be attending, so the agenda continued on with steelhead production reports.

HNFH Steelhead Production – Mark Olson

Mark handed out a summary of the steelhead production at the HNFH. There was discussion by Tom Rogers about the HNFH practice of feeding 2x Vitamin boost to fish one month prior and one month after fish marking. Doug Munson responded that he felt that he didn't think it could hurt anything and would consider the cost as a factor. Mark responded that the cost is minimal for the HNFH and that it appears to be helping disease issues. Paul Dorman mentioned the use of Beta-glucans at NSFH and there was some discussion as to its effectiveness by Ray Jones, Rick Lowell, and Jerry Chapman. Paul Dorman reported that Rangen's is adding Beta-glucans in their Diets from Starter to #4 crumbles.

The proposed stocking dates for HNFH are from 3/28 to 5/11. Brent Snider suggested that HNFH, MVFH, and McCall need to coordinate their stocking of the Little Salmon to avoid congestion on the roadway. Brent Snider asked if SFH should continue to take 100% ovarian sampling on the broodstock they use for HNFH and MVFH. Doug Munson answered that they should continue to sample 100% of the broodstock used. Brent Snider also suggested that the 2004 distribution plan document worked well and he would like to see it used again.

Pahsimeroi SFH – Doug Engemann

Doug handed out the PFH egg eye up and distribution information. Doug discussed trying to shift the spawning run later in the season. The goal of moving the spawning run is to produce later fry that do not have to be taken off feed to meet NOAA size restrictions at stocking. Jerry Chapman suggested that

water chilling is another available alternative. Doug Munson was concerned about shipping fry due to whirling disease considerations. Eggs do not transfer whirling disease, but fry are susceptible if they are exposed to affected water.

There was some discussion about genetic loss from run shifting. Jerry Chapman suggested that genetic diversity is maintained by following the protocol of egg take from 10% of the early run fish, 50% of the middle run fish, and 100% of the late run fish. Paul Abbot suggested that historically 50% of the Pahsimeroi fish have spawned after May 1st. Chris Harrington added that it appears that the Late Spawning fish produce late-spawning offspring, but that early spawners produce offspring that will spawn throughout the duration of the run. There was some discussion by Bill Horton, Paul Dorman, and Chris Harrington as to the goal of the program and whether shifting the run to a later date would still make the fish available to anglers under current fishing regulations. Bill Horton stated that the regulations could be adjusted in the future if the run timing was causing the fish to be unavailable to anglers.

Tom Rogers brought up the issue of stocking Cascade Reservoir with excess steelhead from PFH. Doug defended the reasoning of excess eggs (500,000 – 800,000) as back-up for any catastrophic losses suffered by the receiving hatcheries. Tom, Paul Abbot, and Bill Horton agreed that surplus eggs are needed to avoid shortages and that PFH has reduced the excess from previous years.

Magic Valley FH – Rick Lowell

Rick told the group that they had been using hydrogen peroxide on Hayspur fish with good success. The mortality rates had dropped from previous years by almost 20% and they had an 87% survival rate to transfer to Hagerman State Fish Hatchery. Rick stated that they had also tried the treatment on steelhead, but they had not witnessed any drastic increases in survival. MVFH hatchery had noticed some soreback earlier this season and had tried Chloramine-T, Hydrogen peroxide and Oxytetracycline, but hadn't observed any effects from these treatments. Currently, the fish seem to have come around from the infection.

Spring flows continue to decline at MVFH and the current 77 cfs is down from 80 cfs last year at this time. MVFH plans to release two groups of smolts around March 14th into Lower Salmon River because of declining spring flows. The rest of the fish should be distributed from April 4-22. There was some concern voiced by the attendees about the water temperatures in the Lower Salmon River in early March and the added stress on the fish. Bryan Kenworthy suggested that in a legal sense, releasing fish early may suggest that there is an alternative to the water shortage issue. Some discussion was generated regarding the point at which you adjust management to compensate for declining spring flows before a catastrophic event occurs.

Chris Starr pointed out that MVFH is planning on producing 100,000 fewer steelhead next year due to decreasing spring flows. Chris expressed concern that MVFH will be 200,000 smolts below production from 2 years ago and asked for somewhere or somehow (O₂ injection, husbandry practices, etc.) to make up this difference in smolt production. Bryan Kenworthy suggested that HNFH may be able to produce 100,000 more fish next year based on estimated spring flows and projected flow indexes. HNFH spring flow decline is not as drastic as MVFH due to its locality in the aquifer. Chris Starr, Bill Horton, Paul Abbot and others discussed the logistics of HNFH taking on 100,000 more smolts from MVFH production. Kathy Clemens expressed concern of dissolved oxygen levels at HNFH when considering the addition of 100,000 fish.

The decision was made by Bill Horton and Bryan Kenworthy that 100,000 fish would be moved from MVFH to HNFH for Brood Year 2005. Brent Snider confirmed that the HNFH egg request will increase to 1,050,000 Sawtooth Stock from the SFH. Bill Horton will take the proposal back to Sharon Kiefer for her concurrence.

There was some additional discussion about raising larger quantities of smaller fish to remain at the same stocking numbers with reduced spring flows. Jerry Chapman asked if smaller smolts would have lower return rates than larger smolts. Chris Harrington stated that they had not observed conclusive evidence in their studies indicating larger smolts have better return rates than smaller smolts.

Sawtooth FH – Brent Snider

Brent handed out a summary of 2004 production and current fish on station. Brent also discussed options for the limited numbers of B-run males for spawning operations. Well water use has reached its maximum at SFH. Chris Starr discussed current plans to get funding to alleviate the well water problems. Brent stated that fishing is going to be continued to 100 yards below the Sawtooth Weir this season.

Bill Horton anticipates another salmon season this year during the end of March. They are still uncertain on the accuracy of their run predictions because the projections have ranged from half to twice the actual returns.

Niagra Springs – Jerry Chapman

Jerry handed out a summary of production at NSFH. NFH should meet their smolt request for the year and they are experiencing good fish health. NSFH vaccinated for Furunculosis in half of the raceways this year. Jerry discussed that good fish health is due to a variety of factors including: vaccinations, hatchery renovations, Beta-glucans, and management. They have discussed the option of eliminating the vaccinations, but they do not want to change the system that is working. The NFH fish transport tanks had new O₂ stones installed to increase efficiency. The trucks are running at 10-12 ppm at 3.5 lpm. Brian Clifford stated that HNFH ran their tanks around 2.5 lpm.

Bill Horton asked about hatchery specific coded wire tags for the different release points. Chris Harrington responded that the Little Salmon is not very conducive to processing returns, but they should continue marking or they would not have any information to work with. Chris Starr inquired if reducing wire tagging to fund an increased amount of PIT tags would be beneficial. Bill Horton commented that a number of fish brought in by anglers for bio-sampling have been eviscerated, effectively eliminating the PIT tags. Bill also suggested that NOAA may be in the process of changing some of the tagging programs so it is difficult to speculate if a decision could be made about reducing the number of coded wire tag fish.

Jerry Chapman discussed the diversion at NSFH to supply water to Rimview Trout Farm. Jerry commented that a good relationship with the Rimview manager has kept the balancing act working. NSFH is also suffering from cracked intake pipe to the hatch building that is reducing flows. Bryan Kenworthy inquired as to how much involvement the water master has with the water rights associated with NFH. Jerry responded that the water master does inspect water diversions on a monthly basis and more often if the need arises.

A meeting about the Mass Automated Trailers (MAT) will be held after the coordination meeting. Tom Rogers outlined some of the difficulties of the finding personnel to work in the hand clipping trailers and that mechanical trailers could alleviate some of these difficulties. The MAT trailers were funded partially through a congressional mandate. One is in operation and two more are being built for April. Up to three months of training is required to learn how to operate a MAT trailer and concern was expressed about holding personnel in these positions.

Shoshone-Bannock Tribe (unattended)

Aquaculture Industry - Idaho Aquaculture Association (unattended)

University of Idaho Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station (unattended)

The meeting was adjourned by Bryan Kenworthy at 12:40 p.m.